



FACT SHEETS MASTER LIST FOR GENERAL FUNDED PROGRAMS

January 2009

- Accreditation Division
- Audiology: Hearing Conservation Program
- Career and Technical Education Division
- Educator Licensure Program
- General Educational Development (GED) and Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs
- Gifted and Talented State Grant Program
- Health Enhancement Division
- Indian Education Division
- Information Technology Division
- K-12 Education Data Systems
- Legal Services Division
- Office of State Superintendent
- School Finance Division
- School Nutrition Program
- Special Education Division
- Student Assessment Program
- Traffic Education Program



Office of Public Instruction



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Educator Licensure

The Education Licensure Program ensures that educators meet all state certification requirements to provide quality education for Montana's 142,093 school children. The State Superintendent is responsible for issuing all teacher, administrator, and education specialist licenses in Montana. OPI Legal Counsel administers the Education Licensure Program. The program functions include:

- **Issues and renewal of nearly 6,000 educator licenses each year**
- **Maintains an online renewal system utilized by 1,203 teachers to renew in 2008**
- **Maintains an information database of 24,732 licensed Montana educators to ensure current and accurate educator information availability**
- **Responds to over 17,000 telephone calls, 7,000 e-mail requests and 250 office visits annually regarding educator licensure**
- **Works with the Board of Public Education on issues regarding certification and licensure**
- **Updates the OPI web site on the current certification status of all licensed Montana educators**
- **Approves providers of professional development and individual activities for license renewal**



Indian Education

The Indian Education Division serves two purposes. The first is to assure that American Indian students in Montana receive a quality and equitable education. The second is to assure that ALL students leave the public education system with an understanding of the rich history and contemporary issues of Montana's Indians. This obligation is outlined in the Montana Constitution under Article X, Section 1(2): The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity. The Indian Education Division is dedicated to providing leadership, education and information to school districts, students, parents and educational agencies in the state of Montana. The division's functions include:

- **Provides assistance to educators and parents to improve education for Montana's American Indian students**
- **Analyzes American Indian student assessment data and researches to monitor and improve the learning of American Indian students in Montana**
- **Develops effective strategies to reduce Indian student dropout rates**
- **Identifies and conducts training for educators in developing and implementing exemplary Indian education best practices**
- **Provides professional development, materials and support to schools on the implementation of "Indian Education for All" (MCA 20-1-501)**
- **Provides staff support and resources for the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education's Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education**
- **Distributes information on current American Indian education issues to the public**



Accreditation

The Accreditation Division reviews and monitors Montana's 829 K-12 schools and nine postsecondary professional education units to ensure compliance with state statutes and state and federal standards and regulations. The division assists schools, districts and professional education preparation programs by revising standards, providing professional development to implement and align standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development to improve achievement for all students. The Division includes two units: Accreditation, and Curriculum and Instruction. The Division's functions include:

- **Evaluates, revises and implements the Administrative Rules of Montana as adopted and required by the Board of Public Education (BPE)**
- **Operates the OPI electronic Annual Data Collection (ADC) system and provides technical assistance and follow-up support ensuring accurate ADC reporting**
- **Reviews, analyzes and evaluates the annual accreditation status of all Montana K-12 schools**
- **Develops and implements the state on-site review protocol and conducts on-site reviews to determine accreditation status**
- **Reports annually to the BPE and the public on the recommended accreditation status of all K-12 schools**
- **Reviews, evaluates and recommends action to the BPE of the required improvement plans for schools not meeting state accreditation standards**
- **Implements, evaluates and monitors continuous education improvement through the Web-based Five-Year Comprehensive Education Plan (5YCEP) as required by the BPE of all K-12 schools and districts**
- **Provides regional assistance in implementing, evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the 5YCEP**
- **Reviews, revises and implements the Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS) to guide the education programs of the nine postsecondary professional education units; provides technical assistance and professional training for implementation of the PEPPS; conducts training and on-site reviews to determine program approval recommendations to the BPE**



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- **Reviews, revises and implements the content standards and development of model curriculum and classroom assessment**
- **Develops, implements and evaluates effectiveness of the essential learning expectations at each grade level for all content standards**
- **Develops and conducts the systematic state Professional Development of the completed standards, model curriculum and model classroom assessments**
- **Provides to educators face-to-face technical assistance, follow-up support and resources on best practice in curriculum development, instruction and classroom assessment to improve student achievement and graduation rates for all Montana students**
- **Determines the professional development needs of schools on a regional basis and assists in the effective and efficient delivery to school personnel**



Student Assessment Program

Montana students consistently score higher than the national average on a wide variety of achievement tests. OPI's State Assessment Director oversees the development, implementation, and analysis of all student-testing information under MontCAS, Montana's Comprehensive Assessment System. Results of the tests are reported to the Board of Public Education and made available to the public and news media. The Student Assessment Program is also responsible for the administration of the criterion-reference test to meet the testing and accountability requirements of President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" legislation. The program's functions include:

- Oversees the federal No Child Left Behind required annual testing of Montana's 3rd through 8th and 10th grade students in reading and math and in grades 4, 8, and 10 for science
- Collects and analyzes all student test results by grade level, school, and demographic measures including gender, race, students with disabilities, and socio-economic status
- Reports test results annually to the Board of Public Education, the US Department of Education, the public, and the news media [MCA-20-3-106 (29)]
- Works with educators, parents, the public, and the news media on the proper interpretation and use of test score information
- Disseminates test results on OPI web site for each of Montana's 829 schools
- Conducts workshops for test administrators on required testing procedures to ensure accurate and comparable test results
- Hosts an annual OPI assessment conference on best practices in state, district and classroom assessment
- Analyzes and reports to the public and news media additional student test results including the ACT and SAT tests for college bound seniors and the results for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests
- Works with Montana educators to implement a statewide assessment of students with limited English proficiency as required by No Child Left Behind



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Information Technology Division

The OPI Information Technology Division designs and operates the different electronic systems used by OPI to conduct daily operations, communications, and the collection and reporting of school district information. E-mail is the main form of all written communication between OPI and local school districts. The division's functions include:

- Operates the OPI web site which receives more than 3 million visits each year
- Maintains electronic communication among the OPI, Montana's school districts, County Superintendents, Tribal Educators and the Board of Public Education
- Installs, secures, and operates the OPI's network
- Creates and supports software systems that OPI uses to administer programs
- Runs the OPI School Computer Program which has distributed more than 22,000 surplus state government computers and peripherals to 400 school districts
- Operates the "Jobs for Teachers" web site which notifies teachers and school administrators of job openings and provides for online teacher applications
- Operates a knowledge database for educators and the public to "Get Answers" to their questions concerning the OPI or K-12 educational issues
- Runs the Governor's "Montana NewsLinks" site, used by all state agencies to post press releases for distribution to the news media
- Delivers video-on-demand services to K-12 education and the public
- Hosts the Legislature's web site providing up-to-date information, tracking of legislative bills and public hearing information as well as providing video streaming of the House and Senate Chambers and committee hearings
- Hosts the Board of Public Education's web site
- Provides design and publishing services for all OPI publications
- Operates the OPI Resource Center providing research, answering reference and resource questions, and maintaining the OPI research library



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Legal Division

The OPI Legal Counsel provides legal advice and services to the State Superintendent and all divisions within the Office of Public Instruction. The Legal Unit consists of two attorneys and two legal support staff. The Legal Division also administers the Education Licensure Program. The Division's functions include:

- **Reviews OPI documents, including publications, policies and contracts for legal content and compliance**
- **Ensures OPI compliance with state statutes**
- **Provides background review, investigation, recommendation and representation regarding educator licensure**
- **Handles appeals from County Superintendent and County Transportation Committee decisions**
- **Represents the State Superintendent in court proceedings**
- **Assists with the adoption and amendment of administrative rules and for state education laws**
- **Processes and investigates special education formal complaints and requests for due process hearings**
- **Provides technical assistance to parents, schools, and advocacy organizations regarding the delivery of free, appropriate public education for all students**
- **Resolves education-related legal questions and disputes including those arising from the Early Assessment Program**
- **Revises and produces School Laws of Montana**
- **Provides information on school law to parents, teachers and school officials**



Health Enhancement

The Health Enhancement Division includes OPI's "health-related" programs. Units within the Division include School Nutrition Programs, Traffic Education, and Coordinated School Health which encompasses Tobacco Prevention, HIV/Aids Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Drug, Alcohol and Safety Programs, and Afterschool programs. This Division encourages school programs designed to prevent major health problems and health-risk behaviors among youth and to facilitate students achieving their maximum potential.

- **Provides training to 2,639 teachers and school support staff (paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodians, special education aides, food service personnel, coaches and administrative assistants) that includes Blood-borne Pathogen information, Universal Precautions and Safety Practices and policy guidelines for schools**
- **During February 2009, 252 schools and over 23,000 students will participate in the biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This survey has been administered by OPI, in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control, since 1989. The purpose is to assist educators and health professionals in determining the prevalence of risk behaviors that significantly impact the health and safety of students in Montana and provides the ability to measure trends over time**
- **During 2007-2008, 187 teachers received training on HIV/AIDS/STD prevention education programs; including age-appropriate teaching strategies for use with K-12 students**
- **Administers federal grant funds and provides training and technical assistance to 423 school districts for a total of \$1,058,965 from Safe and Drug-Free Schools monies for 2008-2009**
- **During 2007-2008 12,944 students were served through a competitive grant process that supports before and after school programs for children and youth, allocating \$5 million to 58 grants that serve 69 communities throughout the state**
- **Administers a program in cooperation with the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program to provide training and technical assistance to school districts statewide, to use research based approaches to assist students in not starting or ceasing tobacco use; provide \$375,000 in competitive funds to 21 school districts to strengthen prevention programs**



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- Provides technical assistance and training to schools, administrators, and health professionals through the coordinated school health program to improve the capability of schools and local health departments to provide effective, appropriate and culturally relevant school health education programs to their students
- Coordinates its work with other OPI divisions and collaborates with the Montana Board of Public Education, the Montana School Boards Association and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to help schools design and deliver educational programs that promote healthy behaviors among Montana's greatest resource - its children



Audiology

The purpose of the statewide Hearing Conservation program is to identify children with hearing impairments. The Office of Public Instruction contracts with eight providers (five private providers, two university providers and one public school provider) for audiology services. Contractors provide the needed matching funds for the program's operation. The program is an excellent example of public and private partnership for the benefit of Montana's children. The Division of Special Education administers the Hearing Conservation Program. The program functions include:

- **Ensures Montana's children who have been identified as having a hearing impairment, are reported to schools so that necessary instructional supports can be provided for the children's successful education**
- **Assures public schools have on-going access to qualified audiology providers even in the most rural and remote regions of the state**
- **Screens approximately 63,000 children annually and refers nearly 1700 children for follow-up medical evaluations**
- **Provides comprehensive hearing evaluations for children suspected of having a hearing impairment**
- **Provides follow-up to hospital screenings of infants suspected of having a hearing impairment**
- **Works with schools and contractors to ensure services are provided in accordance with contracts and technical assistance requirements**



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School Finance Division

The OPI School Finance Division is responsible for distributing state funding to Montana's 429 school districts. This OPI division is one of the most cost efficient units within state government. OPI operates the entire school financial distribution system with overhead costs of 1/10 of 1 percent ensuring the maximum amount of state dollars reach the classroom. The division's functions include:

- **Distributes over \$725 million (37% of the Montana State General Fund Budget) of monthly state aid payments to Montana's 429 school districts under twelve separate entitlement programs**
- **Implements new state legislation affecting school district finances and state funding for schools to guarantee accountability for all state education dollars**
- **Directs school district accounting and budgeting policies**
- **Collects and compiles school fiscal data for use by public, federal, state, and local decision makers**
- **Provides technical budgeting assistance and training for school districts, county officials, and school district auditors**
- **Monitors school district compliance with state and federal fiscal regulations**
- **Serves as liaison to the U.S. Department of Education's Impact Aid Program**
- **Operates MAEFAIRS, the electronic financial reporting system that collects and reports school district budget, financial, enrollment and payment information**
- **Reviews 250 school district audit reports each year and monitors recommended corrective actions**
- **Provides technical assistance in the areas of school bus equipment, operation standards, and the interpretation of school bus rules, regulations and laws**



General Educational Development (GED) and Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs

OPI's division of Career, Technical and Adult Education is responsible for the Adult Basic and Literacy Education and GED programs. OPI supports 20 programs located throughout the state serving between 5,000 and 6,000 adults aged 16 and older every year, including adults at the Montana State Prison and the Women's Prison. The adult education program:

- Oversees contracts with 20 centers and 29 satellite programs across Montana to provide Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) services
- Oversees 22 General Education Development (GED) testing sites and 10 addendum sites
- Ensures all GED testing centers are in compliance with the American Council on Education regulations
- Ensures local program centers offer the following high quality Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) services:
 - provides basic education skills development
 - prepares adults for obtaining a GED
 - teaches employment readiness
 - conducts English As a Second Language instruction
 - assists in college preparation
 - assists in employment retention
- Processes over 3,000 GED tests annually
- Annually mails over 10,000 GED duplicate transcripts used by individuals for application to the military, postsecondary education, and employment



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Special Education

The Division of Special Education is responsible for ensuring all students with disabilities, ages 3 through 18, are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state laws. Montana's special education programs have received national recognition for excellence. The Division's functions that provide annual on-going assistance to public schools in meeting the special education obligations include:

- **Allocates over \$41 million in state special education funds to districts and special education cooperatives for support of special education and related services to more than 18,000 students with disabilities**
- **Allocates more than \$35 million in Federal IDEA funds for special education and related services**
- **Monitors district special education programs via site visits, technical assistance and professional development to ensure services focus on improving outcomes for students with disabilities in compliance with IDEA regulations and state administrative rules**
- **Initiates an on-going informal dispute resolution process, the Early Assistance Program, that has resulted in reduced incidents of due process hearing and administrative complaints**
- **Dispenses more than \$600,000 Federal IDEA discretionary funds for professional development**
- **Provides assistance to parents and special education professionals and paraprofessionals to meet the individual needs of Montana's students with disabilities**
- **Distributes over \$500,000 to schools to assist in meeting the needs of students with significant needs**
- **Provides technical assistance and support to over 50 Montana districts which are newly implementing a Response to Intervention process to ensure the provision of scientific, research based instruction strategies to students experiencing learning difficulties prior to referrals to special education**
- **Collaborates with other state agencies to address the needs of Montana's students with disabilities**



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Office of the State Superintendent

The Office of the State Superintendent provides leadership for Montana's K-12 public education system that includes 829 public schools, 142,093 students, and 12,536 certified educators and licensed professionals and management of OPI employees to achieve the Superintendent's statutory duties. The Office of Public Instruction's mission is: *to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve*. The State Superintendent and her staff functions include:

- **Focuses agency policy, planning and procedures to build a quality education system in Montana providing resources for every classroom**
- **Identifies and promotes key legislative initiatives targeted at achieving adequate school funding, ensuring quality educators, raising student achievement and supporting classroom instruction**
- **Fulfills fiduciary responsibilities to the school children of Montana by maximizing revenue from school trust lands**
- **Administers the No Child Left Behind Act**
- **Builds partnerships to promote quality in education with the Governor's Office, Higher Education, Legislature, education partners, MT State Library, Workforce Investment Board, and state and national education coalitions**
- **Communicates information on public education and current educational issues and challenges to parents, the public, schools, businesses, state, local and tribal governments, the Legislature and the news media**
- **Promotes accountability by overseeing the annual statewide testing of MT students and analyzes and reports results to the Board of Public Education, schools, and the public**
- **Promotes the development of valid and reliable education information systems improving information exchange among schools, the OPI, policy makers, and the public**
- **Supports the Board of Public Education with resources, services, and research**
- **Ensures rapid response and communication in the event of a threat to safe schools and homeland security**



Traffic Education Program

The Traffic Education program provides education and training for safe driving practices among Montana's novice and experienced drivers. The program is fully funded with state special revenue and fees for the training and testing services they provide. The Health Enhancement Division administers the Traffic Education program. Functions of the program include:

- **Approves novice driver education programs for 141 high school districts, utilizing 300 trained driver education teachers thereby making it possible for drivers under age 18 to obtain a drivers license pursuant to Montana law**
- **Distributes \$800,000-\$975,000 annually of state special revenue to school districts for driver education programs serving 10,000 students**
- **Provides professional training for driver education teachers through traffic education workshops**
- **Reviews credentials and training for driver education teacher licenses**
- **Collaborates with the Department of Justice in administering the Cooperative Driver Testing Program through 115 school districts**
- **Collaborates with the Department of Transportation and provides leadership to the young driver priorities of the Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan.**
- **Conducts 35-45 full-day and 2 half-day Advanced Driver workshops for 450-550 Montana Department of Transportation personnel, driver educators, school bus drivers, ambulance drivers, fire fighters, utility and service sector drivers and others**



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Career and Technical Education Division

As career opportunities change, Montana's schools must also prepare students for real jobs in the real world. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division helps create an educated Montana workforce by supporting education programs in agriculture, business, family and consumer sciences, health occupations, industrial technology, and marketing. One hundred sixty-three Montana high schools (99%) provide CTE programs. The division's functions include:

- **Assists with the curriculum development and implementation of Big Sky Pathways**
- **Plans and provides professional development support for CTE teachers to ensure Montana's programs have current educational content**
- **Communicates with schools concerning State and Federal Career and Vocational/ Technical Education funding**
- **Monitors Federal Carl Perkins and State CTE programs and expenditures**
- **Provides assistance to parents, educators, schools and communities related to careers and career and technical education**
- **Develops and updates Montana Standards and Guidelines for Career and Vocational/ Technical Education**
- **Creates partnerships for CTE programs with business and industry associations and the public**
- **Serves as State Advisor for CTE Student Organizations**

Montana Career and Technical Education Facts

- **Agriculture Education - 78 approved programs serve 4,707 students and have 78 FFA student chapters with 2,628 members.**
- **Business/Marketing Education - 158 approved programs serve 15,390 students and have 82 Business Professionals of America (BPA) with 1,456 members and 13 DECA student chapters with 432 members.**
- **Family and Consumer Sciences Education - 121 approved programs serve 9,986 students and have 72 Family, Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) student chapters with 1,233 members.**
- **Health Occupations Education - 10 approved programs serve 581 students and have 7 Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) student chapters with 136 members.**
- **Industrial Technology Education - 113 approved programs serve 13,488 students and have 32 Skills USA student chapters with 505 members and 10 Technology Student Association (TSA) chapters with 132 members.**



School Nutrition Programs

The OPI School Nutrition Programs unit administers U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs and the OPI Cooperative Purchase Program. The Programs' functions include:

- **Provides 80,136 lunches daily in 808 Montana schools, and provides children the opportunity to practice nutrition education skills learned in the classroom. The National School Lunch Program also offers programs that provide after school snacks and commodity foods.**
- **Assists 153 schools in Montana serve snacks to 2,280 children every day at after school sites which aim to promote the health and well being of children and youth in our communities. A school must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities.**
- **Coordinates distribution of USDA purchased commodity foods to schools that provide lunches to students. The state entitlement of \$3,263,245 is dispersed to schools on a fare share basis. Schools may use \$280,795 of the entitlement to purchase fresh produce through the Department of Defense Fruit and Vegetable Program.**
- **Provides 23,286 breakfasts daily in 690 Montana schools that promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors**
- **Provides milk every day to 785 children in 28 Montana schools who do not have access to other meal programs**
- **Provides 8,644 children at 159 sites across Montana get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school through the Summer Food Service Program**
- **Provides schools with nutrition education materials for children and families; technical assistance for school food service directors, managers, and staff; and resources to build school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity through the Montana Team Nutrition Program**
- **Provides small schools the opportunity to take advantage of 25-40 percent cost savings through bulk purchasing of high-quality nutritious foods to 65 percent of Montana schools that provide school meals through the OPI Cooperative Purchase Program**



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- **Provides students in the neediest elementary schools with fresh fruit and vegetable snacks with \$641,000 used to support 28 school districts reaching more than 10,000 students in 50 schools during the 2008-09 school year. The goal of the program is to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by children over the long-term through their daily diet. Parents and community partners are encouraged to get involved to strengthen the impact through nutrition education activities, and overall family support. Since procurement of the produce can be local or regional, another benefit of this program is that it can be an economic boost to Montana's economy.**



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Gifted and Talented State Grant Program

The Gifted and Talented State Grant Program provides supplemental support for gifted and talented services in public schools. The Gifted and Talented State Grant Program administers state funded grants to assist districts in meeting the requirements under Administrative Rules of Montana 10.55.804. Functions of the Gifted and Talented State Grant program include:

- **Evaluates annually applications from school districts for Gifted and Talented grants, distributing funds and monitoring grant awardees**
- **Hosts training for teachers and administrators in using the best educational practice for meeting the state standards for Gifted and Talented programs**
- **Conducts on-site visits to school districts to assist schools in ways to best serve Montana's Gifted and Talented students**
- **Collects data on the number and percentage of Montana students identified as gifted and talented at every grade level to increase achievement for all gifted and talented students**
- **Works cooperatively with the Montana Association of Gifted and Talented Education**
- **Develops, disseminates, and implements resources to schools to improve services to gifted and talented students**



K-12 Education Data Systems

Funding for K-12 Education Data Systems supports OPI's agency-wide efforts to coordinate data collection and reporting. The major systems that are supported with state funding are the AIM (Achievement in Montana) statewide student information system, the development of a school staffing module, and OPI's electronic grants management system. Their functions include:

AIM, Statewide Student information System

- Collects student enrollment, demographic, and program participation data through AIM from all school districts and accredited private schools
- Uses the AIM system to register students for the statewide student assessment and report on student achievement and Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind
- Develops training materials including Montana specific AIM Quick Reference Guides and data collection tutorials
- Trains school staff on the use of the Montana Edition (local school district software) and the Special Education reporting tool
- Trains OPI staff on OPI's Student Records Confidentiality Policy, which applies to all contractors, employees of OPI, and researchers requesting access to confidential, sensitive or restricted student information
- Provides public reports and analysis on indicators of student success, including attendance, graduation and dropout reports

Electronic Grants Management System

- Provides the ability for school districts to apply online for 14 federal grant programs administered by OPI
- Supplies easy access to online technical assistance and information related to allowable uses of program funds
- Facilitates OPI's online review and approval process for grant applications and notices of awards to 429 school districts and numerous other eligible community-based and non-profit applicants



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- **Allows school districts to submit online cash requests and to access information about the status of project payments over multiple years**
- **Facilitates OPI's monthly electronic grant payments to subrecipients and ties payments to the status of grant allocations and appropriations on the state's accounting system (SABHRS)**
- **Facilitates collection of data about planned uses of federal grant funds, used in reporting to the federal government**